

Congressman Mike Pence visited with senior residents at Longfellow Plaza to discuss implications of current health care reform proposals for the cost of their care:



[Pence answers seniors' health care questions](#)

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ANDERSON - Residents at Longfellow Plaza senior apartments are worried about what a drastic change in federal health care policies could do to them and their families.

About 15 senior citizens gathered at the apartments' clubhouse Friday to try and get answers from U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, who represents the Anderson area. Many were concerned about how the health care bill now being considered by Congress would affect their Medicare and supplemental insurance.

"I think they should do something to keep the rich from getting richer and the poor from getting poorer," resident Martha Boyer said.

During his talk with the residents, Pence endorsed a health care plan that would allow individuals to purchase health insurance across state lines and band together in larger groups to make it cheaper to receive coverage.

"If you get on the Internet and see that insurance in Ohio or Kentucky or Michigan is less expensive, you can't buy it," Pence said. "What if we said to Hoosiers and businesses, 'You can look anywhere in the country'?"

"President Obama is right that the answer is more competition."

Pence also endorsed a health care plan that would create medical malpractice laws that set reasonable limits damages awarded in medical malpractice suits, which he said would help keep doctors from calling for expensive health procedures just to avoid being sued.

Resident Faye Skinner asked about the "death panels" that members of Congress have said would be set up with government-run health care. Some have criticized that the government's involvement in health care would give it the authority to decide who lives and who dies.

"I don't think it's the intention of anyone in Washington, D.C., to create any kinds of panels," Pence said. "But Washington, D.C., is the capital of unintended consequences."

"At the end of the day, (government-run health care) does lead to rationing. It's almost inconceivable to think that would not result in benefits being denied to some Americans."

Many of the senior citizens in attendance agreed with Pence's assessment of government-run health care and rationing.

"It might not be when it first begins, but I think it would end up that way," Skinner said.

Although Obama has made it clear the health care bill would not require anyone to get rid of their current health insurance and switch to a public option, Pence said allowing for a public option likely would have the same effect, as employers choose to offer the government-run

option instead of private health care.

Regardless of which final bill passes Congress that will offer health care reform, Pence said more access to health insurance is needed.

"Most people in Congress agree on the destination, but they don't agree on how we get there," he said. "We really don't know what the final bill is going to look like."

Pence said he learned a lot from the meeting with Longfellow Plaza residents.

"I learned a long time ago that there's an enormous amount of wisdom and common sense in conversations with Hoosiers," Pence said. "It demonstrates the degree to which people are paying attention to this issue."

Pence said he had a responsibility to his constituents and then to represent Republicans in the national debate over health care.

"I felt it was important to have a conversation, particularly with seniors, this week making sure people understand where the debate is at," he said.